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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the literature on the involvement of ethnic minorities in physical education. These minorities include Hispanics, American Indians, Asian Americans, and African Americans. In physical education, as in other disciplines, currently the number of minority professionals in teaching is declining. Through a review of literature on minorities, the paper addresses relevant topics that may enhance understanding of minority issues in physical education. The major topics addressed are: (1) the factors affecting the participation of minorities in teaching, (2) the nature of minority teacher representation in teaching, and (3) ways for increasing the number of ethnic minorities in physical education. Also under consideration are complex factors that have an impact on participation of minorities in the teaching force: the number of years of schooling which affects the rate of entering minorities into teacher education; access to educational opportunities which enhance growth and employment; and the loss of minorities as role models in the teaching profession. (JD)

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The Minority Agenda in Physical Education: Perspectives and Suggestions

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The Minority Agenda in Physical Education: Perspectives and Suggestions

Introduction

This paper examines the literature on the involvement of ethnic minorities in physical education. Ethnic minorities as defined in this paper include Hispanics, American Indians, Asian Americans and African Americans. As one sifts through the massive literature on teaching in America, there is a realization of a steady decline in the number of ethnic minorities in the teaching profession. If practical and effective methods are not employed to reverse the current declining trend of minority professionals in teaching, then they (ethnic minorities) will extinguish from teaching.

One of the popular reasons for the decline of minorities in teaching has been described as the "pipeline effect" by many authorities and scholars who agree that by increasing minority access to education from the kindergarten through postsecondary education the declining trend will be reversed. It seems to follow logically that, since more ethnic minority children are now attending our public schools the declining trend should reverse, but this does not appear to be the future trend. By the year 2000, fifty percent of all urban school children will be from ethnic minority groups. Concurrently, only five percent of all the

college students will be from ethnic minority groups. This small percentage is the pool preparing for all professions, not just for the teaching profession (Haberman, 1987). Greater participation of minority teachers will be required for the increasing numbers of minority children and the consequent cultural and racial diversity in the schools. The implications of the decline in numbers of minorities in teaching, the absence of appropriate role models, and other essential educational issues seem to be clear. However, the solutions to these problems are less clear.

This paper addresses relevant topics that may enhance our understanding of minority issues in physical education. The paper presents a review of the literature on minorities and discusses various perspectives for increasing the involvement of minorities in physical education. Specifically, four topics are addressed including (1) a analysis of the factors affecting the participation of minorities in teaching, (2) a discussion of the nature of minority teacher representation in teaching, and (3) a discussion of ways for increasing the number of ethnic minorities in physical education.

Factors affecting minorities in teaching

A decade ago, predictions of a shortage of minority teachers were made by scholars and authorities but policy initiatives in response to this significant issue have been

very minimal. As reported by Smith (1989) an AACTE survey found that only fourteen states have initiatives to recruit minorities into teaching. In addition, no federal programs focus on minorities.

Most of the existing state programs agree that the participation of minorities in the teaching force is influenced by combinations of complex factors including (i) the number of years of schooling which consequently affects the rate of entering minorities into teacher education in general, (ii) access to educational opportunities which enhances growth and prepares for employment, and (iii) loss of minorities in the teaching profession.

Years of schooling

The number of years of schooling for ethnic minorities differ from group to group and may be influenced by combinations of social, environmental, economic, familial and religious factors. For example, the average number of years of schooling for Hispanic students is 10.2 (Census Bureau, 1979). This means that most Hispanics do not graduate from high school and thus they are less represented in college. The few Hispanics who graduate from high school are (1) less willing to attend college far from home, (2) less willing to pay a high tution, (3) more willing to attend a public two-year college, and less willing to attend a private four-year school.

The average number of years of schooling for African American students is 11.9 (Census Bureau, 1979). Among all high school graduates, African Americans accounted for 11% and comprised 10.2% of the full time undergraduate population in 1980. However, as undergraduates, African American students frequently selected (in order of priority) the fields of business management, education, and social sciences. At the graduate level African American students selected education as top priority.

Although Asian Americans make up only 2% of the population, they receive 25% of all degrees awarded in the health related fields and 7.5% of the engineering degrees. They also account for only 1% of the degrees in education and social sciences (Scully, 1985).

American Indians are grossly underrepresented in college graduating classes. American Indians did not complete college for many reasons including (1) lack of finances, (2) poor math skills, (3) poor writing skills, (4) poor study habits, (5) poor English Language skills, and (6) home problems.

The implication for lesser years of schooling is very clear. Most minorities are unable to graduate from high school. Consequently, fewer number of minorities enter college. According to the American Association of Colleges

for Teacher Education's (AACTE, 1987) member survey, minority students in teacher education programs constitute only 10%. This include 4% African Americans, 2% Hispanics, 2% Asians, and less than 1% Americans Indians. Complex combinations of social, environmental, economic and other related factors greatly influence completion of high school for most ethnic minorities.

Access to educational opportunities

There has been wide speculations regarding the factors that account for the lower representation of minorities in teacher education programs. One set of reasons center upon underpreparation of large numbers of minority students graduating from high school; a second set centers upon the increased use of the Scholastic Aptitudes Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT) scores and higher grade point average admission requirements by colleges and universities; a third set centers upon the declining representation of most minority groups in higher education, the declining interest of minority students in teacher education and the desire to enter career fields that were previously closed to minorities, and the financial aid crisis in the 1980s. (Witty, 1982; Witty and Jones, 1982; Baratz, 1986; Graham, 1987; Darling-Hamond, Pittman, and Ottinger, 1987).

The combined impact of (1) higher admission standards in form of higher cut-off scores on standardized tests such as SAT and ACT, (2) higher standards for admission to teacher education programs as manifested by increased minimum scores on standardized tests such as the SAT and the ACT, (3) minimum scores on teacher competency tests, and (4) minimum scores on the National Teacher Examination (NTE) impose serious limitations upon the entrance of minorities into the teaching profession.

Infact, these limitations perpetuate a racially exclusionary and elitist teaching profession. An example of the effect of higher admission standards in the form of higher cut-off scores on standardized tests on prospective minority teachers may be found in the State University System of Florida. As Mercer (1984) reported, this system has been striving to improve educational standards in its nine universities since the mid-70's when lawmakers became concerned that quantity, not quality, was setting the tone of higher education in Florida.

During the 1980-81 academic year, some 8,500 potential freshmen applied for 2,500 seats at Florida State University. They were expected to have 2.0 grade point average, a score of either 800 on the SAT or 17 on the ACT. Other universities have raised their admission requirements beyond the present minimum levels. What this means, in

general, is a declining numbers of ethnic minorities entering into teacher education and declining numbers of ethnic minority teachers. Furthermore, the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in the teaching profession is influenced by the loss of minority personnel due to attrition.

Loss of minorities in teaching

The loss of minorities in the teaching force is a phenomenon that is difficult to substantiate fully. The loss of minority teachers may be due to voluntary attrition associated with dissatisfaction with the profession. For example, results from the Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher (1988) indicate that African American and Hispanic teachers are more likely to leave teaching than their non-minority counterparts. In addition, 55% of minority teachers with less than five years of experience say they are likely to leave the profession. It is hypothesized that between 25% and 30% of the currently employed minority teachers in the seventeen southern and boarder states, are rapidly approaching retirement. For example, 47% of the teaching force in Louisiana with 15 or more year's experience are African Americans (Kauchak, 1984), and 28% of African American teachers and 27% of African American principals in North Carolina have 25 or

more years of experience and were eligible for retirement (Warner, 1986).

The rate of attrition of minority teachers due to dissatisfaction and retirement combined with reduced numbers of entering new teachers predicts an even greater reduction in minority teacher representation in the teaching profession (Smith, 1989). This is an alarming situation realizing that 50% of all urban school children will be from ethnic minority groups in the year 2000. Concurrently, the racial and cultural heritages will be remarkably diverse in school populations. This will require the involvement of more ethnic minorities, however, only 5% of all the college students will be from ethnic minority groups by the year 2000. This represents the pool preparing for all professions, not just for the teaching profession (Haberman, 1987).

Consequences of minority underrepresentation

As Cooper (1988) stated, the low representation of minority teachers "is potentially harmful to all youth ... continued presence of minority teachers and administrators in the schools, the maintenance of a climate supportive of ethnic pluralism, and the concept of multicultural education all correlate with maximizing the opportunities for educational achievement, even educational excellence for minority children and youth" (p. 123).

The low representation trends in the year 2000 (Haberman, 1987) coupled with the potential loss of certain ethnic minority groups (Trammer, 1980) will restrict the pool of certified minority teachers which will eventually reduce the numbers of minority superintendents, principals, curriculum coordinators, and counselors (Smith, 1989). Second, cross-cultural exposure for children of the majority population will be nonexistent and the development of appropriate social and racial attitudes will be impeded unless all cultural and racial heritages are adequately represented in the educational institutions and professions. It must be noted that, America has achieved its greatness as a dynamic nation because of its many represented cultures and racial heritages (Acosta, 1986).

A third consequence is that many minority youngsters of school age will never come in contact with minority adults in position of power and authority. This is a real tragedy in terms of the development of the child's self-esteem. The real importance of the minority teacher is in his/her unique opportunity to bolster his students' self-image (Crase, 1970). When minority children cannot expect more than two of their 40 or more teachers during the K-12 years to be the same-race models, their aspiration levels are likely to be diminished (Smith, 1989). This does not imply that a primarily white teaching force is incapable of

teaching minority students but that the role-modeling of the teacher as a major socialization agent and the informal interactions between the teacher and the community will be eliminated. For example, most white teachers in "majority-minority" schools do not live in the minority community even when such schools are located in minority areas. The teacher's role in the community support system that would normally provide affirmation of the child's worth is not likely to remain an important part of the minority child's developmental environment.

With low representations of minorities in the teaching force both white and non-white children alike will not see minority adults in professional roles at school. The unspoken message of stratified race and ethnicity and class distinction will be transmitted more forcefully than the message of democracy through promise of equal opportunity. As the Carnegie Task Force Report (1986) indicated, race and background of teachers tell children something about authority and power in contemporary America. These messages influence children's attitudes toward school, academic accomplishments, and their perceptions of themselves and others. The perceptions they hold in school about justice and fairness also influence their citizenship.

Minorities in physical education

A fair amount of literature exist on minorities in education in general. Within physical education only a handful of articles can be cited in the literature that relate to the minority issue. Many comparative studies have been published. On physical performance parameters Jordan (1969) compared the African American with the white physiologically and anthropometrically in an attempt to show the relative differences between the performance of specific athletic events. Olsen (1968) attempted to show sufficient evidence for questioning the concepts, quality and opportunity of the African American through sport involvement. Doctoral studies by Alexander (1977) and Murphy (1979) examined the participation of minority women as athletes and coaches within the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women. These efforts are encouraging but they contribute little to our understanding of ethnic minorities in physical education-teacher education.

The general shortage of minorities in education and teacher education programs (Hill, 1983; Thomas, 1986) coupled with the fact that minorities often do not select physical education as a priority field of study suggest a more serious shortage crisis of minorities in physical education. There is no information about the few

minorities who prioritize physical education as a field of study. What determinants influence young minorities to select physical education as a field of study? Specific answers to this question are nonexistent. In a broader sense Schaffer (1963) found that most students (both whites and non-whites) who major in physical education make this decision in secondary school. Persons most influential in the student's decision are the students themselves. Apparently, one of the most desirable determinants for socialization and guidance of the students into the field, namely, the teacher, is not functionally relevant. Most students' personal reason for selecting the field is their work and play experience with children, peers, and adults, in areas of recreation and sports activities. Apparently, not satisfying experiences in their high school physical education classes.

The picture of minorities in physical education is not very clear as there are limited articles that directly address the issue. Henry (1969), Evans (1970 and 1971), Cobb (1970) and Kirk (1969) presented evidences regarding the extent of participation and involvement of minorities in professional physical education. Also, Crase (1970) articulated the importance of the minority physical education teacher and strongly urged physical educators,

both white and non-whites to address concerns that tend to hinder social mobility in physical education settings.

In a more recent study, Crase & Walker (1988) indicated that in 1987, only 77 (55%) of the 139 graduate departments of physical education identified 207 African American students enrolled in master's level curriculum. This is the figure for all specialization areas in physical education. The numbers of doctoral students have been alarmingly small. For example, for three years (1983-1985) only 22 of the 567 doctoral recipients in physical education were African Americans (National Research Council, 1986).

One conclusion appears to be unmistakably clear - the minority professor of physical education is an endangered academic species, and efforts must be designed to reverse this ominous trend otherwise universities will continue to compete for that small pool of minority graduates and the prestigious, well-financed institutions committed to aggressive and innovative recruitment procedures will undoubtedly be more successful in this process than the others (Crase & Walker, 1988).

Increasing minorities participation in teaching

A review of recommendations proposed by individuals and professional organizations provide a beginning point for informing policy development and for designing programs

aimed at reversing the shortage of minorities in physical education. Various professional organizations and individuals who have written on this issue have made different recommendations based on how they perceive the minority issue. For example, authorities who view the minority teacher issue as a numbers problem have made recommendations regarding recruiting strategies. Some have made recommendations focusing on the factors associated with the decline in the number of minority teachers [i.e. testing]. Others, have also focused on economic factors [i.e. lack of financial aid]. Generally, most professional groups and individuals agree that the minority underrepresentation in teacher education is an educational pipeline issue.

The recommendations of most authorities and organizations provide comprehensive source of guidance for designing and implementing recruitment and retention programs. There is considerable consensus regarding what must be done to increase the minority numbers in education. There are moderate differences in perceptions about whether or not racism should be confronted and about whether "broadening the pool" means focusing upon gifted students or developing the potential of the less gifted. Authorities are somewhat polarized on the issue of admission and certification testing. Most of the recommendations are not undergirded

by strong empirical evidence. Also, they are not particularly new. This should not denigrate the broad range of recommendations available. Instead, it is intended to awaken researchers and to encourage creativity.

Recruitment and retention of minority faculty and students

Overwhelming agreements exist in the literature that the pivotal element in fostering minority participation in education must be the attraction of a "critical mass" of minority faculty members - that is, recruitment in sufficient numbers to establish minorities as a permanent, integral feature of university life. First, there is a moral case for making a special effort to attract minority faculty. Minority students, faculty and staff need each other. In some respects this is most urgent when as now, the number of minorities is relatively small. It is at this stage that the overwhelming majority environment may seem most "alien" to the minorities. As the number of minority students grow, other needs will require minority faculty. To the extent that students seek faculty models to emulate, minority models will be sought.

Second, the attraction of a critical mass of minority faculty will expose students to diverse perspectives in the classroom and provide a broadened educational experience. In addition, it will <u>signal</u> the development of a more

heterogeneous, welcoming atmosphere for learning and in turn, help attract and retain a more diverse student body. Furthermore, it will contribute a broad and vital socio-cultural context that will enrich the lives of all members of the university community.

A preponderance of opinion from individual authorities and organizations has made it clear that recruitment and retention of minority faculty should be placed at the top of the institution's agenda in attempts to increase the critical mass of minorities in physical education. It is my belief that physical education programs must make concerted, comprehensive, and well-funded efforts to approach this problem on two levels including (i) enhancement of recruitment and retention efforts to increase the number of minority instructional faculty, and (ii) enhancement of efforts to recruit and train minority graduate students to help increase the national pool of minority scholars in the years ahead.

Enhancement of efforts to recruit and retain minority faculty: An exemplary program for increasing minority teachers in physical education would have to assume no financial restrictions, an unrealistic condition for most institutions. Nevertheless, given a free reign, a comprehensive model can be developed based on the variety of recommendations available in the literature. It is my

strong belief that a model for increasing minorities in physical education must be comprehensive and aggressive. It must have strong institutional support, and also provide directions for successful recruitment and retention of minority faculty and students.

First, physical education departments must create an in-house program designed to attract distinguished minority faculty members for periods of one or two academic years. The program should provide attractive salaries and the potential for funded research assistance and reduced teaching loads. This may ultimately lead to the offer and acceptance of a permanent senior faculty appointment for distinguished faculty.

Second, physical education departments must embark upon creative recruitments efforts other than the traditional recruitment methods to identify potential minority candidates - from typical advertisements in professional journals to affirmative action procedures. Experience has shown that the successful method to identify and recruit minority applicants has been <u>direct personal contacts</u>. This initiative should include visits to other institutions, including predominant minority institutions, to urge minority graduate students to consider the department as a potential place of employment and to urge minority undergraduate students to apply for graduate

study. These visits should demonstrate and promote the department's commitment to minority recruitment and provide a personal, informative, and persuasive overture that is lacking in the traditional recruitment method. In addition, students, faculty, and administrators should be made to know that the department is devoted to cultural and racial diversity.

The successful recruitment of minority scholars is of little benefit unless strenuous efforts are undertaken to retain them. In some cases minority faculty members are hired on short-term or temporary basis with no prospects for permanent employment. Such hiring practice creates or encourages, unconsciously perhaps, a "revolving door" hiring policy with respect to minority junior faculty. The establishment of a permanent cadre of minority faculty members and the elimination of any action that might give rise to the perception of a "revolving door" approach to minority hiring are essential to build a heterogeneous community.

Enhancement of efforts to recruit and retain minority students: The scarcity of minority faculty members is, of course, a significant problem for higher education nationally and a conspicuously acute problem in physical education. From the national perspective, the problem is becoming more severe. For example, according to U.S.

Department of Education statistics, the number of African American students enrolled in graduate school in the United States shrank from 65,352 in 1976-1977 to 52,834 in 1984-1985, a decline of 19.2 percent. In 1976 African Americans were 6 percent of this nation's graduate students; by 1984 they had fallen to 4.8 percent.

In general, minority enrollment has failed to show any significant increase in recent years in spite of constant pressure to recruit them (Loury, 1987). Some variance is usually reflected in degree totals depending upon the year and source. For example, in 1982-1983, African Americans received four percent (1,095) of all doctorates compared to 78 percent (23,047) for whites. Another 18 percent (5,375) went to Hispanics, Asians, nonresident aliens and others (Ottinger, 1987). For 1983-1984, the percent of all doctoral degrees going to African Americans was 4.8 percent (Grant & Snyder, 1986). According to the National Research Council's annual reports, the aggregate for 1983, 1984, and 1985 was 75,379. Of that three-year total, 3,098 (41%) of the doctorates were conferred on African Americans (National research Council, 1986).

It appears colleges and universities have a golden opportunity to enhance the heterogenity of their faculties. More than one-third of the entire American professoraite (now, of course, composed of white males) is expected to

reach retirement by the year 2000. The significant number of vacancies that will occur are, in theory, potential positions for minority scholars. Unless the downward trend in minority graduate school enrollment is reversed, the number of minority academics available to compete for these vacancies will be insufficient to increase the percent of minority faculty in our colleges and universities.

Physical education programs must do all they can to help overcome this problem by committing themselves to a vigorous campaign to augment the national pool of minority physical education teachers. Physical education departments must place the recruitment and guidance of graduate students at the top of its agenda and must develop a program of incentives to encourage its own and other institutions' minority students to pursue graduate training at the university leading to careers in physical education.

A major problem in attracting minority graduate students has been inadequate fellowship or teaching/research assistantship funds. Physical education departments must develop additional funds earmarked for minority graduate students. The provision of graduate fellowships for minority students will necessitate a considerable financial commitment.

The life of the minority undergraduate is interesting and sensitive. First year students must confront the dual traumas of separation from home and community and initiation into academic environment far more demanding and independent than that of secondary school. Minority students entering an overwhelmingly white institution bear the additional burden of coming to grips with a social and cultural environment on campus that for some appears distant, alien, and unwelcoming. Physical education departments must confront this special phenomenon through genuine integration based on an unequivocal commitment to create a welcoming learning atmosphere that values and actively encourages cultural diversity. Such an atmosphere, along with the support structure it implies, would enhance the retention of minority students. At the same time, it would provide vitality and richness to the academic environment as a whole.

Also, the perceptions of many minority students is that considerable numbers of majority students and faculty do not believe that minorities merit admissions to the college or university and assume that minorities have been admitted or employed only to fulfill a quota. These perceptions must be altered, modified and eventually dispelled in order to create a welcoming academic atmosphere for growth and development.

A Final Comment

One of the overriding implications that emerges from the existing recommendations is that creativity and experimentation will be necessary to stem the minority teacher shortage. A second implication is that short-term solutions alone are not likely to be sufficient to compensate for the severity of the minority teacher shortage and, therefore, must be accompanied by long term-solutions.

Greatly enhanced fellowship assistance plus strenuous recruitment and retention efforts are essential if progress is to be made in increasing the numbers of minorities in physical education. In addition, the recruitment and retention of minority students should involve cooperative work with public school systems. Specific goals should be operationalized to include (1) successful recruitment and retention strategies for minority students, and (2) development of programs to cultivate the characteristics known to be required for teaching physical education.

To the extent that the discussions and suggestions in this document may be laudable, it is imperative to understand that every university has its own history and must be taken into account when developing and implementing recruitment and retention programs. The discussions and suggestions in this paper are based on personal experiences

and a review of the literature relevant to the minority issue in education and physical education. Therefore, the suggestions must be considered as general directions that can be adjusted, modified, refined or extended in the development of minority programs, not an end.

Little can be done about the institutional history upon which specific recommendations for recruitment and retention of minorities can be developed. As Dehne (1985) indicated, the ethos of an institution are tied to their histories. Recommendations must therefore recognize the character of the institution -- This paper is highly limited in this perspective. The character of an institution has a great deal to do with who founded it and why, the assets and/or liabilities of the location, its traditional mission, and the like. These may reveal historical strengths and weaknesses that will help or hinder the future development and implementation of minority programs with specific recommendations for recruitment and retention. Where then do we go from here?

To develop a program for increasing minorities in physical education based on the ethos of the institution a study group must be formed to identify and gather information about current operational procedures designed to recruit and retain minority individuals to careers in physical education. The initial tasks for the study group

must include (i) a review of the current preliminary document on minorities, (ii) contacts with individuals known to be deeply involved in the problems and issues of minority recruitment. (iii) contact with professional organizations and associations, and (iv) appropriate federal agencies that provide support for minority initiatives.

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